

Senate Resolution No. 39

Introduced by Senator Corbett

Relative to Irish American Heritage Month.

WHEREAS, Millions of Irish people, faced with severe hardship due to famine and poverty in their nation, immigrated to the United States over the last several centuries in search of a more promising future for themselves and their families; and

WHEREAS, Irish Americans initially suffered prejudice and discrimination upon first arriving in the United States. As the years went on, Irish Americans became very involved in the community and made numerous contributions in all aspects of American society and culture, especially in California; and

WHEREAS, Irish Americans played vital roles in the development of the United States. Nine Irish Americans were signers of the Declaration of Independence, and 20 Presidents of the United States have been of Irish heritage, including John F. Kennedy, Ronald Reagan, Bill Clinton, and Barack Obama; and

WHEREAS, Many people of Irish descent have contributed to great movements that have helped to shape our country and its role in the world, including Mother Jones, labor activist; Lucy Burns, activist in the Women's Movement; and Senator George Mitchell, negotiator of the Irish Peace Accord; and

WHEREAS, Irish Americans have also played a major role in California politics. Many governors, legislative leaders, city mayors, and other public officials who have shaped the development of California over the years have been of Irish descent; and

WHEREAS, Irish Americans were significantly involved in the development of infrastructure throughout the United States, especially in California. This included work on railroads and bridges that connected the West to the East. The Irish were also instrumental in the building of dams, roads, canals, and buildings that expanded greatly in the late 1800s; and

WHEREAS, Many Irish Americans have made their mark as peace officers and firefighters, and have risked or lost their lives on countless occasions in carrying out their duties; and

WHEREAS, Irish Americans have served with distinction in every war that this nation has fought. Many outstanding soldiers who fought for American freedom in the Revolutionary War were of Irish descent. Since then, Irish Americans have sacrificed their lives in every other war in which the United States has fought; and

WHEREAS, Many Irish Americans have contributed greatly to the United States economy in business, including Henry Ford; Alexander Stewart, the inventor of the American department store; Cathleen Black, president of Hearst Publishing; Jack Welch, former president and chief executive officer of General Electric; and Herb Kelleher, cofounder of Southwest Airlines; and

WHEREAS, Irish Americans have contributed to the field of science, including astronaut Michael Collins, first female commander of a Space Shuttle Eileen Collins, physicist and Nobel Laureate Charles Townes, and bioengineer and MacArthur Fellow James Collins; and

WHEREAS, Irish Americans have contributed to the American literary tradition through great authors, including Flannery O'Connor, Eugene O'Neill, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Mary McCarthy, Tom Clancy, and Frank McCourt; and

WHEREAS, Irish Americans have contributed to American entertainment through such stars as actors Jack Nicholson, John Wayne, and George Clooney; actor and comedian Bill Murray; actress Grace Kelly; actress and comedian Rosie O'Donnell; actor and singer Bing Crosby; actresses and singers Rosemary Clooney and Judy Garland; comedian Conan O'Brien; and actor and director Edward Burns being of Irish heritage; and

WHEREAS, Today, over 44 million Americans claim Irish heritage, and they continue to contribute to the American and Californian political, economic, and cultural landscapes; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, That the Senate, in honor of the multitude of contributions that Irish Americans have made to make this a better country and state for all people, designates March 2010 to be Irish American Heritage Month in California and calls upon the people of the state to observe the month of March with appropriate ceremonies, programs, and activities, especially on March 17, since everyone is Irish on St. Patrick's Day; and be it further

Resolved, That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.

Senate Resolution No. 39 read and adopted by the Senate March 15, 2010.

Attest: _____
Secretary of the Senate